

22 September 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Admission of Satellite Reconnaissance

1. I understand that you will soon be urged to release "the fact of" our conduct of satellite photographic reconnaissance in the course of a speech at the Kennedy Space Center on 1 October. I strongly support the downgrading of the fact of satellite photographic reconnaissance. How and when we declassify are matters of considerable import.

2. First, there is the issue of timing. The declassification of "the fact of" satellite photographic reconnaissance just prior to the trial of Kampiles for selling a document on satellite reconnaissance to the Soviet Union could impact adversely on that trial. I believe it would be to our advantage to declassify "the fact of" our conduct of satellite photographic reconnaissance in the course of that trial and by an unobtrusive statement by some official lower than yourself shortly thereafter. This would make it appear to our public and to foreign governments that we had made a deliberate decision that the benefits of prosecution of Kampiles outweighed any disadvantages of declassification. I believe this would garner greater understanding and respect for this action.

3. Should you decide to include the matter in your 1 October speech, there still remain two ways in which you could handle it:

a. Deliberately: You could pointedly focus attention on the fact that you were changing our previous policy of not acknowledging that we conduct photographic reconnaissance from satellites.

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b. Unobtrusively: You could simply slip in a sentence describing some satellite photographic reconnaissance.

4. I believe that focusing attention on the move by doing it deliberately would be unwise. In my opinion, the American public may view this as another lessening of our ability to retain secrets. I believe the reaction of the friendly foreign intelligence services may also be adverse because we have had so many other examples of our inability to keep secrets. The unobtrusive approach would reduce the risk of these reactions, but I doubt that it would be possible to keep it unobtrusive if it were done at your level. In short, I believe that if this move is made in the course of your speech, it is not likely to redound to your or the country's benefit.

~~by Stansfield Turner~~

STANSFIELD TURNER

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D. C. 20505

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I'd like to
have my views
on this go to Pres.
if the October
speech issue is
presented to him-

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